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Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENNA 0575

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FROM US REP MBFR

EO: 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, NATO
SUBJ: MBFR: CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET DELOFF JANUARY 21, 1974

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: US DEPREP HAD CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET DEL MEMBER KVITSINSKIY ON JANUARY 21. CONVERSATION WAS AT REQUEST OF US DEPREP IN EFFORT TO GO MORE DEEPLY INTO BACKGROUND OF SOVIET THINKING ON FREQUENCY OF PLENARIES AND USE OF INFORMAL DISCUSSION GROUPS AND FOCUSED ON THESE TWO TOPICS. KVITSINSKIY ALSO MADE A NUMBER OF REMARKS ON DATA. END SUMMARY.

2. US DEPREP ASKED KVITSINSKIY WHAT WAS REAL BACKGROUND OF SOVIET RELUCTANCE TO DECREASE NUMBER OF PLENARIES. US DEPREP POINTED OUT THAT SOVIETS HAD NEVER BEEN GREAT DEFENDERS OF PLENARIES IN CONTEXT OF TROOP REDUCTION NEGOTIATIONS, THAT SMIRNOVSKY AND KHLESTOV HAD COMPLAINED ON OCTOBER 30 AT OUTSET OF MAIN NEGOTIATIONS THAT TWO PLENARIES PER WEEK WAS EXCESSIVE NUMBER, AND THAT KHLESTOV HAD INDICATED TO US REP PRIOR TO DECEMBER RECESS AND NETHERLANDS REP FOLLOWING DECEMBER RECESS THAT SOVIETS WANTED TO MOVE TOWARDS REPETITION OF SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE WITH EMISSARIES DURING PREPARATORY TALKS. IN LAST FEW DAYS, SOVIETS HAD APPARENTLY BECOME LESS POSITIVE ABOUT EMISSARIES AND WERE SPEAKING NOW IN TERMS OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS. US DEPREP SAID THE DISTINCTION DID NOT APPEAR TO BE GREAT TO HIM. MOST IMPORTANT POINT, HE BELIEVED, WAS THAT
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TIME HAD COME IN TALKS TO DEVELOP SOME FORUM FOR MORE DETAILED INTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF APPROACHES OF BOTH SIDES, A PROCESS WHICH COULD NOT BE CARRIED OUT IN FORMAL PLENARY SESSIONS. HOWEVER, IN EITHER EVENT, IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT PREPARATION OF INFORMAL

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GATHERINGS FOR MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION WOULD REQUIRE JUST AS MUCH TIME AS PREPARATION OF PLENARIES IF DISCUSSION WERE TO BE PRODUCTIVE AND THAT AN EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF PLENARIES WOULD CUT INTO THAT TIME.

3. KVITSINSKIY REPLIED THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THE SOVIET POSITION: MOSCOW OFFICIALDOM HAD BECOME USED TO THE TWO PLENARY PER WEEK RHYTHMN. MOSCOW WAS NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE ALLIED POSITION AND WAS NOT YET SURE THAT THE ALLIES WERE REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT TROOP REDUCTION NEGOTIATIONS. MOSCOW OFFICIALS WERE AWARE THAT THERE WERE MORE FREQUENT PLENARIES IN CSCE THAN IN THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS. THERE WAS A CERTAIN FEELING IN MOSCOW THAT THE EASTERN DELEGATIONS IN VIENNA AS WELL AS THE WESTERN ONES WERE NOT VERY ACTIVE AND HAVING AN EASY TIM. THE FACTS OF POLITICAL LIFE AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOVIET DELEGATION AND THE MOSCOW CENTRAL WERE SUCH THAT IN HIS VIEW THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE SOME SPECIFIC GROUNDS TO JUSTIFY A SOVIET DELEGATION RECOMMENDATION TO CHANGE THE PRESENT PATTERN.

4. BEYOND THAT, KVITSINSKIY COMMENTED, MOSCOW SUSPECTED THAT THE ALLIES HAD SOME AS YET UNREVEALED MOTIVE FOR USGGESTING A DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PLENARIES. FURTHER MORE, SOME OF THE WARSAW PACT ALLIES WERE QUESTIONING WHAT THEIR OWN ROLE WOULD BE IF THE NUMBER OF PLENARIES WERE REDUCED. THEY TOO HAD OFFICIALS AT HOME WHO WISHED TO SEE SOME VISIBLE ACTIVITY. THE ROMANIANS WERE A SPECIAL DIFFICULTY BY THEMSELVES. MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE A POOR PRINCIPLE FOR THE TALKS THEMSELVES IF THE PATTERN WERE CHANGED TO PERMIT USE OF SOME OTHER FORUM AND THIS FORUM WERE NOT PRODUCTIVE. IT WOULD BE WISE TO MAINTAIN A REGULAR PATTERN OF PLENARIES FOR THAT REASON.

5. US DEPREP ASKED KVITSINSKIY WHICH WAS MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE FACTORS. KVITSINSKIY SAID IT WAS RELUCTANCE OF MOSCOW OFFICIALS TO CHANGE EXISTING FORMAT UNTIL GOOD REASON TO DO SO COULD BE PRODUCED. US DEPREP SAID ALLIES DID NOT PROPOSE TO REWARD SOVIETS FOR ENGAGING IN DISCUSSIONS DESIGNED TO ADVANCE THE NEGOTIATIONS IN COMMON INTEREST.

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6. US DEPREP STRESSED THAT ALLIES THEMSELVES WISHED TO MAINTAIN REGULAR PLENARIES BUT AT LESS FREQUENT INTERVALS. HE ASKED, LEAVING ASIDE ISSUE OF FREQUENCY OF PLENARIES, WHAT DIFFICULTIES SOVIETS SAW IN MORE INFORMAL DISCUSSION. KVITSINSKIY SAID THAT IF THERE WAS INFORMAL DISCUSSION, HE THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE BETWEEN US AND SOVIETS. US DEPREP SAID ALLIES REGARDED MBFR AS ALLIANCE ENTERPRISE AND NOT AS US-SOVIET OPERATION. KVITSINSKIY THEN SAID THERE WOULD BE SOME DIFFICULTY IN SELECTING PARTICIPANTS ON EASTERN SIDE, AGAIN, PARTICULARLY, BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, WITH THE ROMANIANS. KVITSINSKIY ENDED BY SAYING THERE SHOULD BE NO GREAT PROBLEM IN RESOLVING THESE MINOR ISSUES. THE MATTER WOULD SHAKE DOWN IN SOME WAY IN NEXT WEEKS.

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7. REVERTING TO EARLIER DISCUSSION OF DATA WITH US REP JANUARY 17, KVITSINSKIY SAID SOVIET DEL HAD BEEN CONTINUING TO REVIEW THE FIGURES AND THAT ALTHOUGH OVERALL DIFFERENCE TO FAVOR OF PACT MIGHT BE AS MUCH AS 50,000 IF AIR AND GROUND FORCES WERE INCLUDED, HE COULD NOT SEE HOW THE DIFFERENCE COULD BE LARGER.

8. US DEPREP POINTED OUT TO KVITSINSKIY THAT IN SHORT DISCUSSION ON JANUARY 16, LATTER HAD SAID DIFFERENCE WOULD BE 10,000, ON JANUARY 17 HE HAD MENTIONED 20 TO 30,000, AND NOW HE WAS TALKING ABOUT 50,000. KVITSINSKIY SAID FIGURES COULD NOT BE PRECISE AND THERE MIGHT BE SOME DUPLICATE COUNTING. HE AND COLONEL KAPITONOV, WHO WAS NOW TOP SOVIET MILITARY OFFICER ON SOVIET DELEGATION DURING CONFINEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL TOKUM FOR OPERATION ON LEG VEINS, HAD REVIEWED ALL THE FIGURES UNTIL HIS HEAD WAS SWIMMING. NOW KAPITONOV HAD COME UP WITH THIS ESTIMATE OF THE OUTSIDE SIZE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN OVERALL FORCES OF BOTH SIDES. KVITSINSKIY ALSO COMMENTED THAT KAPITONOV COULD NOT MAKE HIS FIGURES SQUARE WITH INCLUSION OF FRENCH FORCES IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC IN ALLIED TOTALS. SOVIET DEL RECKONED THERE WERE 58,000 FRENCH FORCES IN THE FRG. HOWEVER, SOVIET TOTALS OF ALLIED FORCES IN THE FRG EXCLUSIVE OF THE FRENCH CAME TO ABOUT 770,000. KVITSINSKIY ALSO COMMENTED SOVIETS WERE COUNTING 35,000 FOR U.S. AIR FORCE IN FRG AND 90,000 FOR FRG AIR FORCE. US DEPREP SAID SOVIETS SHOULD IN ANY EVENT STICK TO GROUND FORCES; THIS WAS WHERE AN AGREEMENT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

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9. KVITSINSKIY VOLUNTEERED THAT HE THOUGHT THERE WAS 50-50 CHANCE SOVIETS WOULD ACCEPT ALLIED PROCEDURAL SUGGESTION WHEN ALLIES MADE KNOWN FULL DETAILS BUT DID NOT PURSUE SUBJECT FURTHER IN SPECIFIC

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TERMS. HE DID COMMENT THAT MOSCOW WOULD PROBABLY CONSIDER THAT IN MAKING PROPOSAL, ALLIES WERE TRYING TO POSTPONE TO NEVER-NEVER LAND SOVIET INTERESTS IN REDUCTION OF AIR, NUCLEAR AND NATIONAL FORCES.

10. KVITSINSKIY SAID SOVIETS CONTINUED SUSPICIOUS IN GENERAL ABOUT WESTERN MOTIVES IN ADVANCING THE TWO-PHASE CONCEPT. SOVIETS ASSUMED U.S. WAS STRAIGHTFORWARDED IN OFFERING TO REDUCE ITS FORCES UNDER ALLIED PHASE IPROPOSAL GIVEN DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES IN U.S. US DEPREP SAID SOVIETS SHOULD NOT OVERESTIMATE PRESSURES ON USG. SITUATION IN THIS REGARD WAS CHANGING. KVITSINSKIY SAID THIS MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE CASE, BUT THAT SOVIETS WERE IN ANY EVENT SUSPICIOUS THAT SECOND PHASE WOULD NEVER COME OFF. IT WOULD BE BETTER TO WORK OUT SINGLE OVERALL PACKAGE AND TO LEAVE DETAILS FOR SUBSEQUENT NOGITIATION, AS HAD BEEN DONE IN THE BERLIN AGREEMENT. US DEPREP SAID ALLIES HAD IN FACT PROPOSED AN OVERALL PACKAGE DEAL IN ADVANCING THE COMMON CEILING CONCEPT AND HAD SUGGESTED A SPECIFIC COMMON CEILING LEVEL OF 700,000. KVITSINSKIY SAID 800,000 MIGHT BE FEASIBLE BUT 700,000 WAS TOO LOW. (COMMENT: HE DID NOT EXPLAIN FURTHER, BUT ON BASIS OF PREVIOUS STATEMENTS PROBABLY MEANT IF AIR FORCE MANPOWER WERE INCUDED. END COMMENT.) BUT, KVITSINSKIY CONTINUED, THE MAIN PROBLEM WAS HOW COULD THE SOVIETS HAVE ASSURANCES THAT THE SECOND PHASE WOULD ACTUALLY TAKE PLACE. ALLIES COULD NOT EXPECT THE SOVIETS TO COMPLETE THEIR REDUCTIONS WHILE THE LATTER CONTINUED IN UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF PHASE II NEGOTIATIONS ACCORDING TO THE ALLIED FORMAT. OF COURSE THERE WERE VARIOUS WAYS OF FORMULATING LINKAGE OF THIS KIND. US DEPREP SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT, IF A SUCCESSFUL FIRST PHASE WERE CONCLUDED ON THE LINES OF THE ALLIED PROPOSAL, THERE WAS MUCH DOUBT THAT WESTERN EUROPEAN POLITICAL OPINION WOULD WISH TO COMPLETE THE SECOND PHASE MOVEMENT TO AN AGREED COMMON CEILING. KVITSINSKIY SAID THAT FORECASTS OF THIS KIND MIGHT BE CORRECT BUT WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT FOR THE SOVIETS.

11. KVITSINSKIY TOLD US DEPREP THAT HE PROBABLY WOULD BE RETURNING TO MOSCOW AT THE END OF THIS WEEK IN ORDER TO ENGAGE IN DISCUSSONS NEXT WEEK WITH FEDERAL GERMAN TEAM CONCERNING REPRESENTATION OF BERLIN INTERESTS. HE SAID GROMYKO HAD AGREED WITH PROPOSAL

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FROM KVITSINSKIY'S SUPERIOR, BONDARENDO, THAT KVITSINSKIY SHOULD ALTERNATE BETWEEN HIS PRESENT JOB IN MOSCOW AND NEGOTIATIONS IN VIENNA.HUMES

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